



BIBLE STUDY

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF THE BIBLE



<https://campus.cru.org/college/bsu/community-group-material/>

STUDY **12**

ISAIAH

ISAIAH

OVERVIEW

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

I KINGS 10: 1-13

“This fifty-third of Isaiah is a Bible in miniature. It is the condensed essence of the gospel... one of the chapters that lie at the very heart of the Scriptures. It is the very Holy of holies of Divine Writ. Let us, therefore, put off our shoes from our feet, for the place whereon we stand is especially holy ground.” – C.H. Spurgeon

Isaiah was a major prophet in the Old Testament who lived and ministered in the kingdom of Judah during the 8th century BC (around 740–700 BC). He prophesied during the reigns of several kings, including Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. His ministry took place during a time of political instability, moral decline, and the growing threat of the Assyrian Empire.

Isaiah was likely from a prominent or royal family in Jerusalem, which gave him access to the kings and leadership of Judah. His prophetic calling is described in Isaiah 6, where he receives a vision of God in the temple and is commissioned to speak to a rebellious people.

His message focused on God’s holiness, the sin of Judah, and the coming judgment, but also offered hope through restoration and salvation. Isaiah is especially known for his prophecies about the coming Messiah, including the famous “Suffering Servant” passages (Isaiah 52–53), which Christians understand as pointing to Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53 describes the “Suffering Servant,” a figure who is rejected, misunderstood, and despised by people despite being innocent. He experiences deep suffering, not for his own wrongdoing, but on behalf of others.

The passage emphasizes that the Servant bears the sins of many—taking on their griefs, sorrows, and punishment—so that they might be healed and restored. Though he is led like a lamb to the slaughter and unjustly condemned, he does not resist or defend himself.

Ultimately, his suffering is part of God’s plan for redemption. After his death, the Servant is vindicated and exalted, showing that his sacrifice was effective in bringing forgiveness and righteousness to others. Christians understand this chapter as pointing to Jesus Christ and his atoning work.

Group Context Questions

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY AND HOW?

Who: is Isaiah in the Bible?

What: did Isaiah do?

When: is Isaiah seen in the Bible?

Where: is Isaiah at in the Bible?

Why: should we know about Isaiah?

How: does Isaiah impact us?

VOCABULARY WORDS

“Arm of the Lord”

- The phrase "The Arm of the Lord" is a significant biblical metaphor that appears throughout Scripture, symbolizing God's power, strength, and active intervention in the world. It is often used to describe God's deliverance, judgment, and salvation. This imagery conveys the might and authority of God in executing His will and purposes.

Iniquity

- Def: Perversity, i.e. (moral) evil: -- fault, mischief, punishment, sin

“Cut off of the land of the living”

- The phrase ‘cut off’ strongly suggests not only a violent, premature death but also the just judgment of God, not simply the oppressive judgment of men.

CONTEXT QUESTIONS

Allow your group to share some of their prior knowledge of who this character is and their significance. Familiarize yourself with this character so you can also answer. Make sure to do this in a way that is inclusive of those who may not have any prior knowledge.

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Watch This Video With Your Group

VIDEO LINK HERE: [ISAIAH VIDEO](#)

VIDEO

- Feel free to share these videos with your group so they can also watch. You may also find any other outside sources that you might think to be valuable to their understanding of the Word.

What Are the Questions?

ISAIAH 42:13-15, 43:12, 52:13-15, 53:1-12 (READ THESE ONE AT A TIME)

LAUNCH

Can you think of a time when you expected one outcome but ended up with something different—and it turned out to be better than you imagined?

ISAIAH 42:13-15 THROUGH 43:12

-Read in order: 42:13-15, 43:1-3, 43:4-6, 43:7-9, 43:10-12.

-Ask these three questions for each section.

1. What is happening in this passage?
2. What do these passages show us about man's condition?
3. What do these passages teach us about how the Servant solves man's problem?

ISAIAH 52:13-15

4. What does Isaiah reveal about God's plan by announcing the Servant's exaltation before describing His suffering, and how does this shape our understanding of the Servant's mission?
5. How does the Servant being "marred" relate to the phrase "he shall sprinkle many nations," and what would this connection have communicated to an audience familiar with the Old Testament sacrificial system?

ISAIAH 53:1-12

6. What is the answer to the author's question in verse 1?
7. For the Jewish audience what are the "reasons" for unbelief in the context of the gospel story? (vv.1-3)

8. Why is it significant that the Servant's suffering is not the result of His own sin but comes from bearing the griefs and burdens of others? (vv.1-3)
9. With the condition of Man in mind, why must he carry our griefs and sorrows? (Isaiah 1:5-6 helps us understand this condition) (vv.4-6)
10. What do you think of verses 5-6?
11. How does this verse prophecy of Jesus?
12. How does Isaiah use the analogy of lost sheep to point out Man's condition?
13. Why would Christ not defend himself in the midst of suffering? Why must He die?
14. Why is it important that this was the Lord's will?
15. How would The Servant see his offspring, prolong his days or be satisfied?
16. What does it mean that Christ will receive a portion/spoil and divide it with the strong?

ISAIAH

QUESTIONS

What Are the Questions? (Continued)

LUKE 24: 13-35

NEW TESTAMENT CORRELATION

In light of this passage, how can we look at these New Testament passages and better understand the character of Christ? How can we use these passages and interpret scripture using other scripture?

LUKE 24:13-35

17. What sticks out to you? What's going on in this passage?
18. Why couldn't His disciples recognize Him? What does that teach us?
19. What is the emotional state of these disciples? Why have they lost hope?
20. How do you think Jesus interpreted these Isaiah passages to His disciples? Did this interpretation cause them to have faith? What caused their eyes to be opened?

APPLICATION

21. How do you see the brokenness and pain described in Isaiah 53 reflected in your own life or in the world around you?
22. Knowing the Servant takes on our guilt and suffering, how does this change the way you think about forgiveness or grace in your own life?
23. How might Isaiah 53 encourage you to trust God when facing personal struggles or consequences you don't deserve?
24. How does seeing Christ endure suffering for others inspire you to approach your own challenges or relationships differently?

FALLEN CONDITION

“What do these passages reveal about our fallen condition?”

- Help your group understand and identify the broken state of humanity due to our sin and where we see that evident in these passages.

CHRIST CENTERED SOLUTION

“What do these passages tell us about Christ's response?”

- Amidst our broken, sinful nature, what does Jesus offer as a solution? Where do we see a solution in these passages?

GRACE ENABLED RESPONSE

“What do these passages teach us about how we should live?”

- How should we live now with these two truths in mind? Develop a one or two sentence long summary of each section to form a summary of what you can learn from these passages.

What Are the Answers?

1. Allow your group to discuss.
2. Allow your group to discuss.
3. Allow your group to discuss. Maybe give background on the Servant Songs.
4. Isaiah 52 announces the Servant's exaltation first to show that His suffering is not a failure but part of God's deliberate plan, shaping our understanding that the Servant's mission achieves victory and salvation through suffering, not apart from it.
5. The Servant's "marred" suffering points to His shed blood, and "he shall sprinkle many nations" shows that this suffering brings cleansing; to an Old Testament audience, it would mean that His suffering functions like a sacrifice, providing atonement and purification for many.
6. Hardly anyone. John Calvin noted that "scarcely a hundredth person will be a believer" in this report – a hyperbolic way to say very few recognize the Servant for who He is.
7. For a Jewish audience, unbelief arose because the Servant came from humble, unrecognizable beginnings—marked by poverty, lowly associations, and a criminal's death—rather than through expected royal power and status.
8. The Servant's suffering is substitutionary—He endured grief and pain not for His own sin but on behalf of others. His suffering was purposeful and redemptive, pointing to a Savior who takes on what we deserve. Spurgeon eloquently describes Jesus as "a man not of sorrow only, but of sorrows... All the sufferings of the body and of the soul were known to Him"
9. Simply because we cannot by any means carry them. Again, showing the depravity of man, in spite of the bearing of our griefs and sorrows we regard him as stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. We curse him despite his sacrifice for us.
10. Allow your group to discuss. Focus your conversation here as these verses act as a thesis statement for the whole passage.
11. These verses prophecy Jesus both physically and spiriutally. The piercing of his hands, crushing of his body, mocking of him on the cross and the wounds of his body are all physical foretellings. Spiritually, the just punishment of sin that would rightly fall on us falls on our savior as a substitute.
 - a. NT cites – read when you get to this if needed
 - i. 1 Peter 2:24
 - ii. Matthew 8:16-17
12. This once again emphasizes the universal need for atonement. Our sin is both individual and collective and is captured in this simple analogy. Recognizing this dire situation God intervenes and takes the sin of man upon himself as the sacrificial lamb. This points to Leviticus 16 and the Day of Atonement where the high priest of Israel lays it on the scapegoat to bear them away. As Paul wrote, "For our sake, [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).
13. Christ willingly submits to the will of the father to glorify him (1 Pet 2:23). The savior must die to pay the penalty for the sins of the people which is explicitly mentioned as death (Romans 6:23).
14. This was the Lords will! Jesus wasn't a victim of earthly powers, but his cross was the ordained work of God. This was God's Victory not the worlds or Satan's
15. He will be resurrected and seated at the right hand of God! The Messiah will look upon his work and be satisfied with every bit of his pain and suffering worth it because of the salvation of his children. He will know of the saving work he is doing and it will save many.
16. The Messiah will be rewarded by the reaping of his spoil after his victory over death. Paul gives us an incredible view into this in Philippians 2:10-11. That we share in his spoil of eternal life by no work of our one by only by his pouring of his soul unto death (Romans 8:17).
17. Allow your group to discuss.
18. Jesus chose not to reveal Himself to them, which shows that He chooses whose eyes are opened.
19. They speak with no hope at all because they have failed to believe/understand that their savior will rise.
20. Allow your group to discuss. It was not until Jesus opened their eyes with faith that they could see.
- 21-24. Allow your group to discuss.

ISAIAH

NEXT STEPS

What's Next?

DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP:

Should we continue discussion on this passage or move on through the text next week?

Do you guys feel confident in your understanding of what was discussed tonight?

Any questions? (Allow anyone to come to you in private if needed)

Announcements

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Where is Cru at this week?

What upcoming events do we have?

Any other announcements? Should be in the slack.

Prayer

BREAK OFF AND PRAY

Take this time as an opportunity to model prayer to those who are younger in their faith.

Provide opportunities for those who wish to pray.

Model different types of prayer like the ACTS model.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Exposition of Isaiah 53](#)
- [Servant Song #4](#)
- [Enduring Word](#)